

----- CPU NEWSWIRE ONLINE MAGAZINE -----
"The Original 16/32bit Online Magazine"

from
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"

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featuring
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the Atari ST computers through an excellent International ST Mail Network.

> The Editor's Podiumâ ¢

The news this week is coming fast.... Atari will be at WOA Anaheim and will support the show as in the past. Atari has a new Atari US president, ST Journal is right around the corner, and of course, the STE is supposed to go on sale in the USA by April. These are but a few of the many exciting items we cover this week. I have noticed where some, (a very select few) have had a few comments about the size of our humble offering. Without getting into a bunch of nonsense, all that need be said is its, as always, the most outstanding bargain to be had in getting the very latest news and information while it is still news and not history.

The major online services are growing in leaps and bounds, CIS is opening nodes in Europe as is GENie. Next month ISD will hold its online conference on GENie direct from Australia. The entire online situation does nothing but get better and better for the users. We hear that the major services are also gearing up to offer 9600 baud in select cities around the nation. Times sure have changed, I remember thinking I was hot stuff because I purchased a 1200 baud modem initially thus bypassing 300 baud. Today 9600 baud is where 2400 baud was 18-24 months ago.

PC Ditto II has turned into the news story of the year, unfortunately, for Avant-Garde it is not a bright and rosy story. PCD2 has managed to bring about some of the hottest arguments I have ever seen on the lines, various individuals have been made comical examples of by the course of events surrounding PCD2. They all showed strong faith in the AG folks only to be zapped right along with the faithful who forked over \$150.00 advance monies for a device that has been a stressful embarrassment to all parties involved. AG has done little or nothing to change this stress filled condition that exists online and throughout the Atari arena at this time.

By their indifferent appearing behavior ie; off the hook phones, send in the chips, don't fix what ain't broken and a generally perceived 'laid back' attitude has resulted in many users and a few developers being placed in extreme compromising positions. We feel its AG's responsibility to put this nonsense to bed, they must send the new pals to each and every person who has already received the board and for those who are still waiting they must send a board with the new pals in place. Lastly, they should set up a program of "Return for Credit" for these huge, badly designed boards once AG has redesigned and has a smaller board available.

This issue has AG and PCD2 covered in three different areas be sure to read them all. We will always will continue trying our hardest to bring you the very best in coverage of all the news and items of interest in the Atari arena along with top notch reviews. Supercharger is covered, in depth, in this issue by two very capable reviewers.

Thanks for your strong support,

Ralph.....

:HOW TO GET YOUR OWN GENIE ACCOUNT:

To sign up for GENie service: Call: (with modem) 800-638-8369.

Upon connection type HHH (RETURN after that).

Wait for the U#= prompt.

Type: XTX99587,CPUREPT then, hit RETURN.

**** SIGN UP FEE WAIVED ****

The system will now prompt you for your information.

THE GENIE ATARI ST ROUNDTABLE - AN OVERVIEW

The Roundtable is an area of GENie specifically set aside for owners and users of Atari ST computers, although all are welcome to participate.

There are three main sections to the Roundtable: the Bulletin Board, the Software Library and the Real Time Conference area.

The Bulletin Board contains messages from Roundtable members on a variety of Topics, organized under several Categories. These messages are all Open and available for all to read (GENie Mail should be used for private messages).

If you have a question, comment, hot rumor or an answer to someone else's question, the Bulletin Board is the place to share it.

The Software Library is where we keep the Public Domain software files that are available to all Roundtable members. You can 'download' any of these files to your own computer system by using a Terminal Program which uses the 'XMODEM' file-transfer method. You can also share your favorite Public Domain programs and files with other Roundtable members by 'uploading' them to the Software Library. Uploading on GENie is FREE, so you are encouraged to participate and help your Roundtable grow.

The Real Time Conference is an area where two or more Roundtable members may get together and 'talk' in 'real-time'. You can participate in organized conferences with special guests, drop in on our weekly Open Conference, or simply join in on an impromptu chat session. Unlike posting messages or Mail for other members to read at some later time, everyone in the Conference area can see what you type immediately, and can respond to you right away, in an 'electronic conversation'.

> CPU REPORTâ €

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Issue # 54

by Michael Arthur

Remember When....

In 1968, Ken Thompson, using concepts from an OS he had worked on called Multics, developed an OS which he named UNICS (for Uniplexed Information and Computing System) so he could play a planetary orbit simulator/game he had ported to the DEC PDP-7, and when AT&T's Bell Labs' Patent Office, after using his operating system for word processing, renamed it Unix?

CPU Systems Roundupâ € XXII

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Optical Computing: Photonics, Optoelectronics, and AT&T

AT&T recently announced an experimental computer based on photonic technology. This has stirred up much discussion on both the capabilities of optical computing, and its role in the future of the microcomputer industry. But in order to understand the potential of both photonics and optical computers, let us take a look at both the differences between photonics and electronics, and how optical computing is being developed...

In ordinary (or electronic) computers, streams of electrons are sent through transistors, which manipulate this flow in a network of "logic gates", which can perform mathematical operations. However, in AT&T's experimental optical computer, bursts of low-intensity lasers are directed towards a light modulating crystal, which acts as a switch. This light energy causes physical changes in the "switch", so they either become opaque (so they absorb light), or translucent, so they can reflect light.

Then, a second burst of lasers (of equal strength) are reflected off the switches, in order to determine which "state" they are in. If a laser that has been directed towards a switch is strongly reflected, then the switch is translucent, and the data bit which it represents is determined to be a binary number 1. If the laser which is reflected from the switch is relatively weak, then the switch is opaque, and the bit is 0. A series of these "weak/strong" switches can then be coordinated into logic gates, so they can perform mathematical operations.

This type of technology is known as photonics. Just as electronics uses electrons, photonics use the components of light (or photons), in its operations. Streams of photons (or light) are generated by either an LED or a small diode laser, and are then transmitted to LMCs (light modulating crystals), which are then coordinated into the logic gates which make up the chip.

There are several advantages to using optical technology for

integrated circuitry, including:

- Speed. Since they are, in essence, what light is made up of, photons travel at the speed of light. Therefore, photonic technology would be a LOT faster than electronic technology. Resulting in MUCH faster computer circuits....

- More compact designs. Far less energy is needed for using beams of light for computing than electricity, since one would not need to pump as much energy into a photonic circuit in order to maintain it. This would also result in photonic devices generating much less heat, meaning that optical circuitry could be fitted more closely than normal electronic circuitry.

Also, while electrons are part of a category of particles called fermions (whose electrical charges repel one another), photons are part of a particle class known as bosons, which do not interfere with one another like fermions. The reason that wires are needed to transmit electrons (and electricity, for that matter) is because competing streams of fermions would otherwise distort each other so much that they couldn't get from Point A to Point B in any semblance of order. Since photons do not have this problem, large numbers of them can be transmitted close (or even through) each other without creating a problem.

This means that different streams of light can be sent next to each other simultaneously. Now, if each stream of light stood for a bit of data, then one could easily implement 64-bit, 128-bit, or even 256-bit microprocessors using photonics. And given that the state of the art in electronic microprocessors is 32-bit chips.... This type of method could also be used to implement vastly sophisticated neural networks or parallel processing systems, since each stream of light could be independently accessed by several photonic circuits.

This, and other benefits of photonics is one of the reasons that Japanese companies have been quietly pumping millions of dollars into optical computing research. Also, it seems that the combination of photonics and holographic technology is being researched. Instead of transmitting light to an LMC, some scientists are looking into directing a stream of light towards holograms, so as to create holographic images on certain points of a two-dimensional grid which would correspond to bits (or pages) of data. Called "Page-Oriented Holographic Memory", this technology could be capable of storing a gigabyte of data on each storage unit. Also, using photonic technology to "read" this unit, one could access data at a rate fast enough to make memory for purely optical computing reasonably fast....

However, while the benefits of optical computing are many, implementing integrated circuitry that is fully based on photonics will take several years of development. In order to utilize the abilities of optical computing in the near future, an upcoming technology called optoelectronics is being developed, which combines the speed of optical technology with proven electronic circuitry.

In optoelectronics, light is transmitted via optical fibers to special photodetectors, which then simply convert light into electrical impulses, which can be used by ordinary electronic devices. In essence, data is sent at the speed of light to each integrated circuit, which then processes the data at a normal rate. This method of interconnecting chips has great potential. For example, whole bus architectures could become networks of optical fiber, sending data at the speed of light for

microchips to process. Resulting in that, instead of carrying only megabytes of data a second (like current bus architectures), optical buses could easily transmit a gigabyte (1024 megabytes) or more amounts of data a second....

Photonic technology, though, is only in its earliest stages of development. Currently, the accuracy of calculations done with completely photonic computers is low in comparison to that of modern electronic computers. Also, new design techniques must be developed in order to develop microchips which take full advantage of the capabilities inherent in photonic technology. However, optoelectronics, photonics, and other technologies used in optical computing will certainly become an integral part of future computer technology....

CPU INSIGHTSâ €
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Apple, Users Suggestions, and the IIgs Plus -----

Recently, this message was uploaded to InterNET (a national computer network of which UseNet is a part of) by a person on America Online, a new Online service for Apple-related computers. It reveals some information about the efforts of Apple's new Apple II marketing group to actively pursue Apple IIgs sales in the US. Interestingly enough, the new Marketing Group was hired around the time of Apple's announcement of a serious drop revenue for the First Quarter of 1990, partly caused by lackluster sales of Apple II computers....

FYI.....

Here's a captured post from America OnLine. Apparently they are actually soliciting input from users in regard to the Apple IIgs.

I regard this as somewhat positive; and was thinking perhaps we could add in some comments here.

Subj: Apple // Wish List 90-01-09 23:00:42 EST From:
AFL Jcline Msgs: 27 (90-01-11)

I just returned from an Apple // conference at Apple Inc., Cupertino and the message is very clear to me that Apple will do what needs to be done to position the Apple // product so that the Apple // holds the place it deserves in the market. A very aggressive marketing group is developing a marketing plan and they want grass roots input. I was there as representative of user groups and they welcomed what I had to say. They want your thoughts and you will start to see the results very soon now. If you would like to be a part of this aggressive campaign, all you have to do is put your thoughts in this folder or the Folder in the User Group Forum (Keyword UGF).

The ground rules are simple if you want to be heard:

- Be positive - What could or should be done.
- Don't be practical, say it! What do you wish Apple would do?
Let them figure out what does not work or is not possible.
- State your wildest wish - go for it!

- Do you want to see different hardware, software, System software, what? Innovative ideas anyone???

This Apple marketing team will be reading all of your input and again, if you want to be heard - be up - be positive. But do it now, this team is aggressive, they are moving and shooting so give them your ammunition while the action is dynamic.

Just start your comment by saying, "I wish..." For example I could say: "I wish I could buy a complete Apple //gs system with built in SCSI, hard drive and color monitor for less than \$1200."

Its your turn and the clock is running...

Jerry Cline User Group Forum Leader

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But ponder, if you will, these questions:

- 1) Given its potential, will the advances in optical computing eliminate the need for electronic computer circuitry which uses superconductors?
- 2) Jean-Louis Gasse, formerly head of Apple's R&D Division, resigned amidst rumors of dissatisfaction over the actions of new Apple President Loren. What effect will this have on Apple?
- 3) What are other ways in which photonics and optoelectronics could be used in making optical computers?

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> CPU STATUS REPORTâ € >>> INDUSTRY-WIDE LATE BREAKING NEWS & VIEWS <<<
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- Armonk, NY *** IBM ANNOUNCES 16 MEGABIT CHIPS! ***

IBM has recently announced development of 16 Megabit DRAM chips, capable of storing up to 16 Megabytes of memory. The most interesting thing about this is that IBM has manufactured 16-megabit DRAM chips using the same plants used for 4-megabit DRAM chips. Most Japanese companies have been developing new production lines for these upcoming chips....

Matsushita has also announced that they will be shipping 16-megabit DRAM chips by the end of this year. Given that 4 Meg DRAM chips have only now gained a measure of industry-wide use....

- Tokyo, Japan *** INTEGRATION OF COMPUTERS INTO SCHOOLS BEGUN ***

The Japanese Ministry of Education has announced a Five-Year program that is designed to integrate computers into the standard curriculum of Japanese schools. With a goal of providing a computer for every two high school students, the Japanese Ministry is also coordinating development of educational software as part of its program....

- West Chester, PA

**** AMIGA HOPES ARE HIGH!! ****

Industry analysts are speculating that the Amiga 3000 will not only have 4 32-bit Expansion Slots (3 less than the Amiga 2000), but will come with 1 Meg of Video RAM and 1 Meg of System RAM as standard, as well as "flickerfixer" hardware, and AmigaDOS 1.4. It seems that the Amiga 3000 may cost less than the Amiga 2500/30, a new version of the Amiga 2000 which has a 25 MHz 68030 chip. Its Cost: \$4500.00.... Amiga 2500/30

- Cupertino, CA

**** ACTIONS ON APPLE TRADEMARK STOPPED COLD! ****

The judge in Apple Corps Ltd.'s lawsuit against Apple Computer recently ruled that Apple was prohibited from engaging in attempts to revoke Apple Corps Ltd.'s trademark in several countries, including West Germany and Japan.

This was one of the stipulations of a contract made between Apple and Apple Corps in 1981, in which Apple was permitted to use the Apple logo and the trademark, "Apple", as long as Apple Computer didn't make any computers capable of producing synthesized music or sound. Since the Mac SE, Apple IIgs, and the Mac II line of computers now have sound chips, and support for MIDI software, Apple Corps Ltd. (a musical company started by the Beatles) is suing to stop Apple from selling all products which violate their contract, and get a royalty of 15 percent on the money Apple has made from these products. And given that such penalties could cost Apple hundreds of millions of dollars....

> ADVERTISING - WHERE? CPU/STR Spotlightâ € Silence is golden, SOMETIME!
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PRODUCT RECOGNITION IS PARAMOUNT!
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by R. F. Mariano

To advertise is to induce sales. Advertising is the lifeblood of any successful business enterprise. Cliches are a dime a dozen, but they are, in most cases, often very correct. Sure, advertisements seen by the general US population will generate sales, but will it create enough revenue to justify the expense of a national advertising campaign?

Let's take a look, first as a comparison, consider the high degree of success in Europe. Believe me, it is no accident or stroke of luck. In almost every hamlet one can find small software shops and each one of them is well stocked in ST software. Why? Because the installed userbase warrants such activities.

How is the installed userbase enlarged? What is the best method to accomplish this in the USA? The answers to these two questions are not simple but they are answerable.

A) - The best method to enlarge the userbase is to sell more machines in a given marketplace. (common sense) To sell these additional machines the potential customer (the one who pays the bills) must be shown a need that this machine will satisfy. The potential customer must also feel comfortable with the reputation of the machine, dealer and manufacturer. Lastly, the machine must be made available to dealers at the same time the advertising takes place or at best, when promised.

B) - A practice with a true, proven track record is ADVERTISING! Ah yes, such a sensitive word at Atari. They have been promising advertising since Moses parted the Red Sea. At least Moses did the right thing. Truly, a suicidal maneuver, in the business world, is to promise something to the userbase in a given market and then NOT deliver. In this case, the United States of America is the marketplace. And then to top the scenario off, Atari, amazingly, acts like the promise was never made and simply must be a figment of everyone's imagination. Atari must advertise and it must not only be in the geographical areas where Sam and his brothers will see it, it must be nationally.

C) - Now, let's look at this from a different angle, granted advertising is an absolute but how can it best be implemented where the dollars spent maximize the effectiveness? Two readily available areas that come to mind immediately are strategic market hubs in the USA, for example; New York City, Chicago, Washington DC, Miami, Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Portland. The second is perhaps Atari's most powerful tool to be utilized in reaching the large numbers of people needed. This is ..Usergroups!

D) - Who, in these lean times, are a more enthusiastic group of Atari supporters than the membership bodies of usergroups nationwide? Usergroups could very easily close the gap of product recognition Atari Computers now suffers from. Usergroup membership bodies encompass an extremely wide cross section of our society and therefore have the means to deliver the message on a grand scale.

E) - Consider this for a moment, if Atari really wanted to penetrate the US market place and ensure product recognition for generations to come, why haven't they challenged Apple by instituting the adoption of a 'computers for schools' program of their own. Mention an Apple computer

to grade school children and they immediately know of, or have used one in school.

F) - Dealers are the next logical step in a planned enlargement of the userbase. They have the unique distinction of actually 'being Atari' to the consumer. And if properly done, a dealer can develop a strong bond between the customer and Atari. You ask; Why isn't this happening? That is not an easy answer. The reasons behind why dealers, users and developers are switching rather than fight is sad. It really used to be they'd rather fight than switch. Many dealers have left because of the lack of Atari's direct involvement in making sure the integrity of a dealer's territory remains protected. ie; deep discount mail order.. yes bunky, it is still going on.

G) - When people step forward with questions or suggestions, the response they usually get is lackluster at best or, as in some cases in the online environment, truly belligerent. This is (at times) understandable because the folks online are indeed frustrated and tired of being 'backed to the wall' by the users. This is primarily caused by the total lack of positive, forward progress by Atari. In some cases they ask for the 'treatment' by getting themselves involved in online issues other than that of product or technical support. The userbase remembers this ..and when the ole iron is hot ..they do their thing. Which ultimately hurts Atari.

H) - Developers well, they are a unique group of people, they do criticize, and when they, as is the case of one developer in particular, get too loud or perhaps too accurate, Atari has a tendency to over-react and has as in this case, cancelled their developer access.

Fortunately, in this market, because of Atari's lackadaisical approach, we have the luxury of being able to observe other's successes and failures thus, we are able to avoid many bad judgement calls. One comparison, in particular comes to mind, this is the National Advertising advocates comparing the European market to ours. There is no way really to compare the two. For example, take the United Kingdom, Great Britain, it can be placed in the state of Florida almost twice. How can one possibly compare the cost of a National ad campaign in the UK to the USA? Sensibly speaking, there is no obvious way. There is however, a number of approaches that may be taken that can justify the greater cost of a National ad campaign in the USA.

National advertising must hold high stakes returns for it to be an equitable effort on the part of any company. Here, in the USA the stakes are as high as they get. For example, the main players are of course, Atari and then comes those who have supported this company. Dealers, developers and most of all users. Once the ad campaign begins, one can readily see renewed vigor in most all of us and indeed renewed enthusiasm will be displayed to those who inquire of us about the computers. Unfortunately, the braintrust in Sunnyvale is still easy prey to the small minded bean counters who seem to delight the executive corps with meager profits. They simply have lost grasp of the buying power the general population of this country is capable of ..once you reach them. The ONLY way to reach them is through a national ad campaign. Period. No amount of double talk or blathering will talk away this basic business fact of life. The stakes involved once Atari gets off its dead end are quite high. In fact, it is easy to see where the future of Atari computers is one of the highest stakes at this time. If they do not advertise nationally this year, the opinion of many well informed, industry observers is simple, "Atari may as well concentrate on things

like the Lynx because they will no longer be considered a player in the US computer market. Those with high stakes involved right along with Atari are the loyal dealers, distributors, third party manufacturers, developers and of course, the users who have supported Atari all along.

If Atari does keep their word and advertise nationally as they have promised three years running, then it is safe to say that the userbase worldwide will swell to well over one million. As this occurs, we will see a dynamic increase in product recognition, software development, and best of all, a solid future for the both the users and Atari. Needless to say, the advertising costs will be more than simply justified, they will be a pleasure to see. If this ever comes to pass, Atari will enjoy its rightful place in the US computer market after all. Time will tell.

> PARSEC BOARD CPU/STR FOCUSâ € Superb graphic power...
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EXCLUSIVE!!
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The Parsec Graphics Board
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by Charles Medley

One of the long standing dreams and wishes for the Atari ST owner has been to own the mythical Parsec Graphics Board. Early reports of its capabilities, revolving around a TI34010 running at 50mhz, were absolutely incredible, and the prospect of such a board attached to the ST added considerable stock to the idea of sticking with an ST for video work (at least for me!)....

A few minutes ago, I spoke with David Encill of Elmtech Research, the company behind this exciting new product. David explained to me some of the exciting capabilities of the Parsec while answering some "down-to-earth" questions from a prospective buyer.

First of all, the Parsec Graphics Board connects to ANY Atari ST via the cartridge port. This means a 520ST could operate in conjunction with the Parsec, just as well as a Mega 2.

The Parsec comes in two models: the 4768 and the 8768. Initially, the capabilities are scaled down to a resolution of 1024x768 with 16 colors/scanline from 4096. As an aside, David mentioned that unlike the regular ST, this means that you can pick 16 totally different colors for each individual scanline! With

768 scanlines, this means a lot.... This "base" model comes with 768k of VRAM (Video RAM), but is easily expanded to the same level as the 8768 mode with more RAM. The Parsec 8768 contains approximately 2.5 MB of VRAM with another 4 MB of "program memory". At this time it should be pointed out that the ST doesn't control the Parsec like a traditional graphics board: rather, it works as the I/O to it, much like the Mega would for the Atari Transputer Workstation (which is certainly not available here in the USA). With all of this memory, the Parsec can then perform some astounding feats:

1024x768 with 8 bit planes (256 colors) from 16.8 million
or 32768 colors per screen (using true 15 bit video).

All of these modes, I might add, are not for just "still-shot" images, but are used for full fledged animation.

The Parsec also comes standard with its own RS-232 and SCSI ports so that it will not hinder itself (or the ST, which probably can't be hindered by an expansion running at 6.25 MIPS!) by relying on the ST's capabilities.

Thus far, the hardware looks impressive, but the first question that comes to mind was whether this expansion would have any software to utilize these mind-boggling specifications.

David mentioned no less than FOUR (4) packages planned for the Parsec. One, "Da Vinci", is included free with the Parsec, and functions as a basic artist's program which exploits the Parsec's unique capabilities.

"Topaz", a GEM emulator, will permit it to run ST GEM applications with little or no incompatibilities. It might be noted that Calamus did NOT work on it in its present state, but the "Topaz" programmer, who is German, is working with DMC (also German) to insure compatibility between the two.

(NOTE: Calamus has had problems with other expansions, such as the Fast Technology Turbo 16. I believe the problem with the Turbo 16 was fixed, so we can only hope that they will be as expedient with the Parsec!)

"Chimera f/x" is a full featured package which takes up where "Da Vinci" ends. "Chimera f/x" is designed to reproduce on the Parsec the traditional artists tools, such as brushes, pens, pencils, and sketching tools. It doesn't stop there, either, because it even takes into account the amount of pressure applied to the drawing tool and mimics the response it would have on the Parsec. "Chimera f/x" also has another unique feature: It will function as the basis of other programs, letting them utilize its capabilities.

The next two programs do just that. David described them as a "solid modeling program which can even import CAD-3D files or Amiga Sculpt 4D files" and a "fractal landscape generator". To say the least, I was absolutely stunned by the possibilities of such a package...

Also, since video professionals need the ability to digitize and genlock live images, Elmttech is planning to offer both a

digitizer and a genlock. David didn't give me any details on the genlock, but the digitizer sounds exciting. It will be capable of "grabbing 250,000 pixels in 8 bit video (256 colors) in real time (!)". This, obviously, is not a toy.

According to the August 1989 issue of ST World (U.K.), the Parsec's suggested list price is 920. Converted to American dollars, that is roughly \$1500. The exclusive North American distribution rights belong to Datel Electronics, a large company that has a base of operations in both the U.S. and England.

Finally, a typical SStatus interview with a developer wouldn't be quite right if we didn't get some kind of information about the men behind the product. David and I had a good laugh about some of the older machines, and how we grew up with our first computers. Mr. Encill's first computer was an Atari 400 with 16k of RAM. If you look at our developer profile in this issue, Mr. Michael B. Vederman of Double Click Software ALSO had his first experience with an Atari 400. Perhaps there is something to that?

He also seemed to be just as excited as I was about the Parsec, and its prospects on the Atari ST. I asked him about the decision to make it for the ST first, and he said that the main reasons were that "the ST was outselling the Amiga back when we started on it, and the ST also lacked video support". Seeing this market as growing, and empty in the vital area they could provide a product in, Elmtech began working on the Parsec as an ST expansion. However, he did mention that it can be easily modified to work on an Amiga or Apple Macintosh and that versions for those machines will be (most likely) forthcoming.

(NOTE: We tried contacting Datel Electronics, 1-702-734-9100, in Nevada for more details. After speaking to Richard Ollins, it seems we've just broken this story just as things are developing. He confirmed that the agreement between Elmtech U.K. and Datel had just been completed, but that it would be another two or three weeks until Datel received actual units in order to properly present the product to the public. They also mentioned that it will not be sold through dealers, but direct from Datel. There was no information on any plans for developer support or incentives through Datel for the Parsec, and Richard referred all inquiries to those effects to Elmtech, in England.)

SStatus Disk Magazine
4431 Lehigh Road
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College Park, MD 20740

\$30/6 issues = 1 year
\$20/3 issues = 6 months.

Please, make checks & MOs payable to Charles Medley.
Write for usergroup discount rates.

> DC'S BEST...CPU/STR Spotlightâ € Mike Vederman spills the beans..
=====

Mike Vederman of Double Click Software
=====

by C. Medley

I have been calling the Double Click BBS for about a month or two, during a period where I ran up a \$220 phone bill calling not only DC Software, but other BBSs as well in the quest for hot and late breaking news.

I also found myself in a quandary when trying to figure out what to include for our "mandatory" 400k of PD/Shareware software we try to include each month. As the quote goes, "Ask and ye shall receive" so I asked Mike if we could use all that juicy DC software and he gave us the okay.

However, in the process, I decided to pester him and the guys at DC for an interview. After last issue's "fun fest" with Jay Craswell, the idea of revealing the programmers behind the products as fun people, not just bespectacled wonder kids who are physically attached to their machines, seemed more fun than harassing some guy over what he was going to release next for the Atari ST...

So, I corralled Mike into an interview by threatening to release photos of him and a dog as a joke. Mike apparently took the threat very seriously, because he gave us this interview <grin>. I think the first question we ask is the key to this entire interview.

How did you get started programming?
=====

"It is a complicated story. How I started in computers. I was 6 or 7, and I grew up in Philadelphia and we had a place called the Franklin Institute which is like the Smithsonian in D.C. My parents took me there and they had a computer that played tic-tac-toe about the size of a file cabinet. I had a cousin with me who I guess was about 4 or 5 years old, and he was playing it, and he didn't hit the reset button right, and instead of giving him a tie, it said he had won. People began to look to see this little kid who had beat this computer, but only a few of us knew he had won by accident. I was really interested in the things

after that..."

"...Time wore on, and I got in to video games. Around 8th grade a friend was taking a computer class, and after school, my friend showed me a 110 baud teletype (TTY) they had..."

"...A few months later, I asked the computer teacher to borrow these two orange books, the BASIC User's Reference Guide and BASIC Programming manual. I must have had the manuals for months, and I didn't have a computer so I tried to teach myself BASIC as best I could with the manuals..."

"...Anyways, the first time I got in trouble with a computer... There was a program a friend and I wrote. There was this REALLY nerdy guy we didn't like, so we made this program that took a word, and made thirty sentences about this guy using it. We got into trouble....."

"...Then in high school, I guess around Junior or Senior year, my Dad picked me up a Bally video game system (NOTE: for those not in the know, this was one of the early video game systems during the era of the Atari 2600, Intellivision and Odyssey 2) with SmallBasic. Before that I had used a simple Commodore programmable calculator (NOTE: Yes, everyone, the Tramiels used to make calculators at Commodore before they made the VIC-20. Even now, a few dealers probably have those new Atari calculators in stock. But anyways, this is why they were called Commodore Business Machines. Calculators ARE business machines!) and I used to convert games like Lunar Lander which were in BASIC to the calculator (YET ANOTHER NOTE: This is not a GRAPHIC version of Lunar Lander! This one used numbers!) and we used to play it a lot... I wrote a really crude "shoot-'em-up" game on the Bally. Basically, this one drew all the graphics block by block, using "POINT" and "DRAW TO" commands, and then drew a little Klingon ship onscreen. Then you shot at it and it shot at you and it kept a score for you and the Klingons. The problem was, the cursor wasn't visible because I had no idea of how to draw something, erase it and redraw it somewhere else...."

"...I went off to college, saw a DEC-10/DEC-20 and I didn't program it, but they had a game like MegaWars on CompuServe that I played forever. I knew I wanted a computer. I started a job working with air conditioners.... I knew I wanted an Atari (8 bit), since I wanted to do graphics. I compared the Atari to the Apple][and the Apple had no sound except that keyclick sound from the machine, and the Atari had great sound, and the games looked alike, so I bought an Atari 400. I also got an Atari 410 tape drive. Then I got the AtariBASIC cartridge and I tried to program this great game concept I had, and it locked up due to an AtariBASIC bug. So, this was back when Atari Customer Support was incredible, and I called up Atari's 800 number and they had someone call me back who told me about the bug, and they told me to save every few minutes. It was very frustrating, and I stopped programming for a while and played games..."

"I also went to usergroup meetings for a while and the topics seemed to float over my head, not because they were technical, but they assumed you knew a lot of stuff about what was out. I stopped going for a while, but I went back once around Christmas time and there was this guy showing ACTION (NOTE: Yep, Mike is

referring to a well known programming language for the Atari 8 bit that in his own words is like "a cross between Pascal and C, with in-line Assembly", and he said "I can't recommend this to anyone, because the manual and documentation is horrible...". The next month, he came in and said "Forget everything I said last month.... This is the best language!" and demo'ed some stuff he wrote. A few of the stores had specials on it and I got it real cheap. The manual was difficult to grasp (at first). I did a few "do-nothing" programs. Then I got an ST (this was a LOT easier to get than my 400!). Before I got the ST I had upgraded to an 800, got a disk drive and a mono in 1984..."

"...Anyways, I got sick and thought about life. I decided that I wanted to have no regrets in life. I knew computers were my calling. I decided to quit my job working with air conditioning, and went back to school. I had to wait a year to qualify for my government loan. I used some of it to get my ST. It was a 520ST with a single sided drive. Incidentally, I got it from the dealer who was the guy who demo'ed ACTION. I got a job with the computer center at school, which let me tell my family "I *can* make money with computers!". The first month I had an ST, I got the GEM kit (developer's kit from Atari), and I wrote "Mike's RAM Disk", which was real popular for a while..."

"...the following year I met Paul and Gilbert through a user group. Actually, I met Gilbert through someone else before that. Paul had done AC Modem using ACTION. I did ST Modem, put a GEM interface on it, and called it ZenithTerm. I guess it looked a little like ST-Term. I programmed it in MegaMax C... Paul then wrote a background transfer program, DC Transfer, which let you do uploads in the background and we put that out into Shareware. And then somebody got us to call ANTIC. We signed a contract and wound up working on Shadow for about a year. Before that we had done "The Formatter". People REALLY caught onto that. We went to a Dallas AtariFest and people recognized us not for ZenithTerm but for our formatter! "The Formatter" was upgraded to DC Formatter... Dave Small began to distribute it with Magic Sac (DC Formatter is FREeware) and it became the de facto formatter for the ST... I guess about eight months later we did version 3.0 of DC Formatter..."

"...Our first commercial product was really DC Port. Gilbert designed it. I've developed a great friendship with Tim Purves at Michtron. He had written a multi-line BBS and it needed an interface and I talked to him at a show. We had a lot of phone calls and bounced ideas off each other... "

"...When we came out with DC Utilities, we had a problem with some people assuming they were Shareware and things like that. It's probably because we've done so much. When we launched it, we called up distributors and stores, etcetera, and about half of them recognized us from our other stuff. They would order them and it really wasn't that hard..."

Now Mr. Vederman must Oblige us with a SStatus Exclusive!

=====

"Okay. Paul is working on putting Zmodem transfers in Shadow!"

(Nah. We need something else. SStatus needs more!)

Mike's Idea of Fun

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"I like going tubing down the Rio Grande or the Guadalupe... All you do is tie a bottom to an innertube, get some beer and relax and drift..."

What do REAL Programmer's Eat?

=====

"Coffee. Anyone who knows me knows I love coffee!"

Major Events in Your Life

=====

"I hitchhiked to San Diego in college. I was pi**ed at my roommates for mooching off me. I was at the University of Texas I was tired of it. I went to San Diego, slept on the beach, I was a bum for a week. I met some really interesting people."

Overall, its hard to talk to Mike Vederman and not be impressed. After talking to him, I think he's the type of programmer I hope to develop into eventually. He seems to have the necessary push and fearlessness to successfully stay alive in the cut-throat world of computers. During the interview, I couldn't help but notice a few similarities between Mike's background and my own, particularly in the ways we first approached computers (a BIG difference is that Mike is part of a "successful" software company. ENiGMA Software, my (ad)venture isn't quite yet!). He is an extremely straight-forward person. He also told me of a few exploits of his that would bear that out. However, he did stress he was never above getting his hands dirty. He is a member of a local user group in Houston and is the ST Vice President because he likes to help other users.

In talking to Mike, I also realized that Double Click is essentially a small company. They consist of Paul Lee, Gilbert Callaghan and Mike, as well as a "contracted" programmer. But after reading a "history" of Word Perfect Corp., and seeing how they changed from a small company much like Double Click, with only two employees, to a multi-million dollar business with thousands of employees in just ten years, it makes you wonder. Mike seems to show the attitude to succeed so far: he wants to branch out into making more and more software, and his ultimate goal is to be able to work a year or so on some other ideas he has. He also is thinking about producing software for other computers (no this isn't blasphemy and no DC is not leaving the ST market!), including the Atari 68030 machine, the TT030/2, which Mike is very excited about (read last issues ComDex article by Mike!).

I would like to end this article by wishing Double Click the best of luck during 1990, and I hope that Mike's dog is not embarrassed by the photos!

> STE & CURRENT S/W CPU/STR FOCUSâ € Keeping things in perspective..
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With the recent rash of "oh boy" type articles having appeared concerning the STE, it became apparent that a more realistic view of this machine was needed and would actually be welcome. The last thing we need in the ST arena is more fodder for lemmings. While the STE is a step in the right direction, it is about 2.5 years late. Hopefully, the powers to be at Sunnyvale will spend less time in front of a mirror (too much image consciousness) and more time planning to release a MEGA STE with both the Mega buss and the VME buss.. In the meantime, a little straight info goes a very long way.... By the way, TOS 1.6 does have the routines built in to handle a delay for the hard disks to get up to speed before booting the entire system. In other words, one power switch does it all. The bad news is it may not work with certain drives including Atari's!

ATARI STE SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY

As you all know, the STe is now widely available in Canada. The unit used for testing was purchased for \$994 (\$830 U.S.). The person performing the comparison sold their 1040 ST for \$800.00, not a bad deal ...or is it? As it turns out, the changes to the STe are significant enough to result with some serious software incompatibilities. The following programs have been tested thoroughly and they will not run on the STe.

1. STOS Basic or STOS compiled programs. 2 Bombs
2. Flight Simulator II, goes into demo mode.
3. Gunship, 2 Bombs
4. High Roller, 4 bombs
5. 10th Frame, Freezes
6. Supercycle, 2 Bombs

An Edmonton dealer informed us that the following additional programs do not work:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Arkanoid | 2. Sky Raiders |
| 3. Pirates | 4. LDW Power |
| 5. Edit Track | 6. LED Storm |
| 7. Downhill challenge | 8. Falcon (certain versions) |
| 9. UIS II | 10. UIS III |

European software seems to have a bigger problem at this time as a good 33% does not seem to like the STE or, could it be TOS 1.6? TOS 1.6 has a number of minor, but extremely annoying bugs:

1. Only boots in low rez when in color,
2. "SHOW/PRINT/CANCEL" box appears occasionally when attempting to run

- a ".PRG" program.
3. The "A" drive box with the file selector does not work when used from Calamus.

The new control panel which you'll have to download from a board works alright, and it allows you to select any of the 4096 colors. I have noticed that colors with RGB numbers less than 4s (ie 444 and below) look the same as 000 (ie Black). You have to take your monitor apart and increasing the gains for RGB in your monitor to be able to see those colors.

The 1040 STe case is still the same as ever (imagine trying to get PCDDITTO 2 into this thing!) and things are even more deceptive considering that the "e" in STe on the label is so small! But don't be fooled. The blitter chip is there and it's doing wonders to almost all the GEM programs, and hopefully software manufacturers will upgrade their programs to make them compatible with the STe. Atari Canada apologized for the lack of compatibility and said they were confident that a fix would be available soon! That's odd. I'm not sure who is more to blame:

The software company who made assumptions about the hardware configuration of the ST, or Atari for not making sure that the STe is compatible with the programs already in widespread use.

Sort of makes you wonder about how compatible the TT will be, and if TT owners will care.

With all the bugs associated with the STe, one has to wonder if Atari is not dumping the first machines on the European/Canadian markets, and will ship "fixed" machines to the U.S. when they become available. Certainly it needs to be soon, as we all know, our American friends have waited far long enough.

For the people out there who want to know if their favorite programs will work on the STe, I have successfully tested the following:

1st Word +	DEGAS Elite	Calamus	GFA Basic 2.0
Spectrum 512	Neodesk 2.0	Swiftcalc	Sundog
Oids	Dungeon Master	Barbarian	Populous
Sierra's Quests	Shanghai	Elite	Hostage
Star Trek	Champ wrestling	Sidearm	Hardball
Flying Shark	Moon Patrol	Joust	Xevious
Time Bandit	World	Karate	Chessmaster 2000
Falcon	Chrono Quest	Stereo Cad 3D	Arkanoid II
Outrun	Touch-up	Silent Service	ST_Term
Speedball	Test Drive.		

Is the STE worth the investment? You bet it is as long as you approach the situation with an open mind. Forget about past dealings with Atari and/or your apprehensiveness concerning the future. The machine itself will satisfy.

> PCD2 - Oh No! CPU/STR Spotlightâ € You want it when?????
=====

PCDitto II
=====

by Chris Martin

Of all the unfavorable messages I had been reading on Genie, I thought, "This product has some critical complications." However, when I was approached to buy a PCDitto II (PCD II) from a friend I said, "Sure why not, they (Avant-Garde, AG) should have the complications figured out soon and have it performing accurately. So I proceeded to purchase it.

When I was inspecting the contents of what was supposed to be in the box: 1) Warranty Card 2) User's Manual 3) Systems disk 4) PCDII Connector board 5) Main Board 6) Interface Cables 7) Main board Insulator Pad 8) Coprocessor Jumper wire; I noticed that the Warranty Card was missing. Now, from remembering what people had said on Genie, that was to no surprise. Still skeptical, I pursued to go ahead and install this product in my Mega 2. I read the very skimpy manual to make sure I did exactly as it prescribed. I removed the cover and shield of my computer to learn that a little half by half inch daughter board was soldered on top of the 68000 chip. Now what you're supposed to do is piggyback the Connector board on to the 68000. Looked like trouble. Back to the manual I went, searching for what to do next. I turned to the 'Installation Problems' section to find that I must remove this daughterboard, set it elsewhere and run jumper wires from it back to the 68000; or purchase a PCD II Expansion Bus Connector (which I haven't seen yet). I elected to desolder the daughterboard and set it aside. Now, I could further the installation.

I attached the insulator pad to the back of the Main board (approx. 5" X 7"), and the Coprocessor jumper wire in a socket to pins 1 and 32, located on the Main board reserved for a 8087-1 numeric coprocessor. Then I attached the PCD II Interface cables to the PCD II Connector board and I had to cross them over each other (below par) to attach them to the Main board. I pursued to attach the PCD II Connector board to the 68000 while getting a very petty fit. I tweaked all the connections with this little bottle of clear liquid that was sent just to 'enhance' them. After I fitted the Connector board to the 68000, I laid the Main board inside, on top of the rest of the circuitry. I noticed that the Connector board had worked its way upward on the legs of the 68000. With those stiff bulky ribbon cables, it's no wonder. So furthermore, I had to squeeze both ribbon cables and tape the excess together. Still, I didn't get a good fit, but it was better than it was.

I anxiously assembled my Mega 2 to try out this new product I had just bought. The harddrive menu came up. I thought, "Good, it still works." I wish I had never thought that, not so soon anyway. I selected a couple of Auto folder programs to further the booting process, and when the desktop would just get ready to display, the screen blanked. "Now what", I wondered nervously. I disassembled the computer again to see if I had knocked something loose during the assembly. I visually inspected

everything, but didn't notice anything faulty. So, I thought, "Before I attach the covers back on, I'll just connect the power cord, harddrive and monitor cables and see if it will work now." Still nothing. I disconnected the ribbon cables from the Connector board and removed the Main board. It still would not work.

I made a phone call to a friend in Florida to see what the problem could be. He graciously asked me, "Is your blitter chip turned off? I read somewhere that it had to be off." "What, that has to be off?" I replied. I then removed the Connector board, booted up, and with relief, the desktop displayed. I saved a 'desktop.inf' file with the blitter off, re-attached the Connector board and the Main board, turned the computer on, and the computer functioned properly this time. Now, to boot the PCD II program.

I first ran the 'PCD_Menu' file to configure the 'PCDitto II' program. When I ran the PCD II program, a message appeared and told me to check connections. I did, and everything appeared to be making good contact. Now, from remembering what people had said on Genie, they had to solder the Connector board onto the 68000; I thought, "I better go ahead and do that." After I carefully accomplished that task, I ran the PCD II program, and this time a message appeared, "Insert DOS disk in drive A:." "It works!" I yelled.

I inserted the DOS 3.2 disk in drive A:. After a few seconds of reading the disk, it locked up. "Now what!" I said to myself. I went back to re-read all the Genie messages I captured, and I noticed that nobody else was getting DOS 3.2 to work either. Only by using DOS version 3.3 would it work. So I had a friend come over that had 3.3 to give that a try. The next thing I knew, I have an "A:" prompt. "WOW, NOW it works!" I proclaimed. Now to see if any of the software I use in my job works.

I proceeded to load up everything I had; it all worked. My friend also brought alot of different software (i.e. Harvard Graphics, Wordstar, Orcad, Dbase III+, Norton Utilities). Everything he had ran excellent. The running speed was excellent too. Norton's rating was 4.2; "Not bad", I thought. I imagined, "I can have the best of both (ST & IBM) worlds now."

It appears that with the Connector board permanently installed (soldered), it will increase the probability of working by, I would venture to say, 99%. Everything on the ST side still functions properly too, so far; as long as the blitter chip remains off. I am sure we will know more in the near future about what is and isn't compatible. There are good accelerator programs available to take place of the blitter, but still, I have it and I want to use it.

As of this writing, AG proclaims the problem with its PCD II not working with DOS 3.2, or at all with other Atari ST's, is a timing change in the ST hardware. They have a solution, but not sure whether it will be a change of a PAL chip on the Main board or a new software version.

If you're interested in emulating an IBM on your ST, then I highly suggest purchasing PCDitto II.

Yes, it has a slight problem right now, which AG is rectifying. When I try to turn on the blitter, the mouse just disappears. Let's hope that we can use our blitter chips again, soon. The price couldn't be better for what it will do. For me, it was worth what I had to go through. If the manual would have stated some of the above problems and the solutions, life would have run smoother.

Mon Feb 12, 1990

AVANTGARDE

Dear pc-ditto II owners,

We are happy to announce we have found the problem with pc-ditto II hardware not working with some STs. We were correct about the changes in timings of some machines being the heart of the problem and our correction widens the tolerance for machines with different timings. We can discuss our findings at a later time in detail, if there are any engineers interested. For now, however, the following describes what to do to receive an update:

1. Correction involves replacement of two socketed chips on your pc-ditto II board. The chips are labeled: U27 GLUPAL (part TIB PAL 20L8-25CNT) and U15 EMSPAL (part TIBPAL 16R4-25CN).
2. Please, carefully remove these chips (a flat-edge screwdriver under the end of each chip works best). CAUTION: Please observe static discharge procedures (as noted in the pc-ditto II Installation Manual) to prevent damage to your board.
3. Then, wrap the two chips in a soft packing material and return to Avant-Garde Systems at the following address:

Avant-Garde Systems
381 Pablo Point Drive
Jacksonville, Florida 32225

(You may call (904) 221-2904 9am to 5pm Mon-Fri if you have questions.)

4. Please include your name and return address.
5. We will return two new replacement chips immediately along with instructions on replacing them.

For owners with pc-ditto II that are already working, replacement of these two chips will not help you. Therefore, we would not recommend "fixing your product if its not broken".

We are now working on a blitter fix and standardized Mega expansion port fixture and will post a message soon about those items.

(Also, if you have already called or written, you will be receiving a letter concerning the above, as well).

P.ANTHONY; posts,

To AG: For those of us who have not yet received our pc ditto II's, what's the chance that they will already have replacement chips on them and how do we tell when we finally get our boards?

Thanks, P.Anthony

DCASTALDI; posts,

To AG: ditto (excuse the pun) P.ANTHONY's question concerning ditto's not yet received; will they have the fix? p.s. I mailed my dittoII money on OCT. 4th, has anyone received their ditto II boards who sent in their monies around that date? How close are we? thanx AG.

Dennis Castaldi (dcastaldi)

R.SCHNEEBERG [Rick-S]; posts,

AVANTGARDE or JIM ALLEN:

I have my clip soldered on and the entire board is already in my machine. If I remove these two chips, will I be able to operate my machine in ST mode until I receive the upgrade?

AG, I do not understand why everyone has to mail back these chips to you prior to receiving the new ones. THIS IS NOT FAIR. WE WAITED LONG ENOUGH!

Rick Schneeberg

D.CHARTER; posts,

Jim Allen/AvantGarde

Jim, With your background (and friendship with Bill), what do you feel is the time it will require for replacement chips to be available? Do you think that PCDs shipping from now on will be updated?

AVANTGARDE I concur with the last message. How about shipping out replacement chips, and let the users return the defective ones. This would greatly increase the speed that PCDs would be repaired. I realize you may end up sending replacements to a few that have operating boards, but providing the new chips would ensure that the purchaser could transport PCD to another computer if a later upgrade happened. Are you ever going to address the size factor? What machine was PCD tested in?

Duane.

J.ALLEN27; posts,

If I were AG, I'd send out replacement PALs to the people they shipped to. They must have records. For the life of me I can't imagine why they'd want a bunch of useless PALs back? And the new ones don't exactly cost a fortune either. I don't know if removing them will kill the system, someone should try before doing it just to make sure. It's not like a bunch of people are out here trying to hoard PALs or something, what gives?

Editor Note;

This entire thing is beginning to sound like a never ending story! Please be sure to read the additional coverage concerning PC DITTO II in our CPU Confidential column. This was late breaking news.

> SUPERCHARGER!! CPU/STR Reviewâ ¢ An in-depth review of Supercharger
=====

TWO solid in depth reviews of SUPERCHARGER!

REVIEW I

SuperCharger -- Talon Technology
=====

by William Y. Baugh

You've heard about it. You've read about it on GENie, CIS and in European magazines. You've may have even dreamed about it. Well finally, it is HERE!. This 'it' is a great new IBM emulator called SUPERCHARGER and it's about to take the ST market by storm (as soon as the Talon cuts through all of the FCC's bureaucratic red tape). Believe me, when I tell you, it will be fully worth the wait.

SuperCharger is not a piece of hardware that takes a person with an Electrical Engineering degree hours to install; SC is a tastefully packaged (Atari gray!) stand-alone piece of hardware that should take you around two minutes to hook up (if you take your time). SC plugs either into the spare DMA port of your hard drive, if your hard drive supports it, or directly into the DMA port on your ST. It's that simple.

Setting up SuperChargers' parameters is just as easy, with the Utilities disk included with the package. The only options that need be set are whether your color monitor runs at 50 or 60 Khz, whether you have an 8087 math co-processor, invert colors on monochrome and set up the parameters of your floppy and hard drives.

SuperCharger is powered by the NEC V30 processing chip which permits it to run a wide range of software including some pieces written for the AT, like Windows/286. Using the V30 is practical and very beneficial, since it is totally compatible with the 8086 processor and will run faster. SC will also support an 8087 math co-processor for added computational speed. One drawback (maybe) is that SC requires its' own memory, thus it comes in two options; 512K and 1 Meg. The drawbacks occur in that they should have made the smallest memory size 640K rather than 512K. When DOS is loaded, it only leaves around 380K to run your applications in. This is sufficient, but some larger applications may cause problems. On the other hand, DOS can only recognize 704K of the 1 meg available; so you have 300K of memory just sitting idly by. Also rumors written in the European magazines will most probably not come true.

I ask the Talon Tech, Richard Betson, if the ST could use the extra memory sitting idle when SC is not in use as a RAM disk or if it could use the V30 processor as a co-processor and he said negative, that SC works only in one direction. But he did have an interesting idea, in that you may set up a RAM disk the size of your ST's available memory and MSDOS will recognize it! That should definitely come in handy for ST owners without a hard drive.

Since I have mainly been interested in the differing IBM emulators for application purposes; I have not tested any games on SC (if I want to play games, why would I choose an IBM over my ST??). So, I cannot state whether the graphics move fast or whether this game play is better or worse than on an XT. On the other hand, the only resolutions you can get (currently) with SC is CGA and MDA; neither one gives you a real reason to want to play games on it. O.k., on to the applications. I ran Norton Utilities on SuperCharger and came up with a 4.2. This is a little slower than others ratings I've seen, but it may depend upon the systems its tested on. (My system is an Atari Mega 2 with an ABCO 65 meg SCSI Seagate drive equipped with an ICD Host Adapter) My main reason for wanting to own an emulator is to run Borland's Turbo C. Well, let me tell you, SC rips when running and compiling Turbo C; its incredible! I've also been running Ashton-Tates' DBASE III+, Telemate (a communications package...yes, they do support the serial port now, it is COM2!) and some PD utilities. All run quite well. Also, Talon has written their own BIOS and created their own systems fonts which are quite attractive and very well done. The Atari mouse is supported as serial port COM1, and works well with all the applications that support it.

Some problems however, have arisen with my machine; namely hard disk access problems. I think SC has a bit of trouble working with ICD's new caching software. I've had cluster and FAT table problems when adding or deleting files in MSDOS. After discovering this, I talked with Richard Betson (SDACE) again, and he said that it may also be that I am running the programs from a GEM partition rather than a dedicated DOS partition. I won't hear from him until after this review has been printed; but I don't think this is a problem inherent in SC. Another point is that when you are booting your ST before gaining access to SC, come in as clean as possible; i.e., no auto programs or accessories that may sit out in memory and cause problems. Other minor problems are being fixed as we speak; the most annoying one the present time is the lack of a '\ ' key. There is absolutely no easy way to get this character. This a conversion problem from the European keyboard to the American keyboard. The only other gripe I had is that SC does not come up in color when booted on a color monitor; you must give the MODE C080 command to bring up the CGA graphics. Even programs that run in color will not boot as such. I'm sure a method will be worked out soon to either have it boot in color (by the utilities disk) or by using the command in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file. Oh and one more thing, please write a manual guys! When people buy a piece of hardware, especially as potentially confusing as an emulator, much more is need than 30 pages of xeroxed instructions.

As stated before, SuperCharger is fantastic! Also the gentlemen behind Talon Technologies, Mr. Earl Miller and Mr. Ashley Miller, have been extremely helpful (and patient) with my many questions. These gentleman are very optimistic that SC will clear FCC soon and ST users will finally have a fully functional, non-destructive (ala easy installation) and extremely fast IBM emulator.

Review II

SUPERCHARGER - THE PREMIER PC EMULATOR!

=====

by Peter Szymonik

Once in a while, an outstanding product comes out for the ST which puts the competition to shame, often the product gets little or no notice until word of mouth spreads. One such product is the new SUPERCHARGER MS-DOS emulator. SuperCharger is truly in a class by itself and it promises to leave other MS-DOS emulators in the dust. Before examining SuperCharger in detail I'll devote some time to explaining what has happened in the past year. Quite a few people are confused about where we stand in terms of MS-DOS emulation on the ST and are wary about plunking down cash for something which has been rumored to be iffy at best.

A few years ago, Avant Garde Systems of Florida paved the way for MS-DOS emulation by introducing a software based emulator, pc-ditto. Because this emulator was software based, it was painfully slow at times, but it did prove that MS-DOS could be successfully run on an ST. The slow speed was an obvious drawback and it was clear that if emulation was ever going to achieve XT/AT speeds, it would have to be done with a hardware emulator. Avant Garde was the first to come forward with an announcement that they were working on an internal add-on board for the ST which would run MS-DOS software at a Norton factor of roughly 3.0 which is near AT speed. Of course, then came the dreaded wait. As the Teals worked throughout last summer their PC-Ditto II emulator, the Smalls were simultaneously working on Spectre GCR, the outstanding Mac emulator. It looked as if by the end of 1989 (the "great" Year of Atari) ST owners might just have the best of three worlds! With Spectre GCR and PC-Ditto II we would be able to run both MS-DOS and MacIntosh programs at full speed on our ST's (in addition to all the fantastic ST software out there.) Our machines would be the envy of the computer world! Unfortunately, while Spectre GCR graced our cartridge ports and filled our screens with happy Mac faces by the Fall, PC-Ditto II was nowhere in sight.

Murphy's Law hit Avant Garde full force. Months passed before the first boards arrived at Avant Garde from its manufacturer, and then much to their horror, the boards were full of defects. The boards had to be scrapped and they had to start all over again and find a new manufacturer. In addition, Avant Garde also had a hard time trying to find a company that could produce its custom-designed ribbon cable and clip. Meanwhile the competition was not standing still.

Two European companies were working on emulators of their own. A German made emulator, PC-Speed, was the first to hit the American shores and is marketed by Michtron. It follows the same basic PC-Ditto II design and is an internal add-on board, but unlike PC-Ditto II which clips onto

the 68000 chip, PC-Speed has to be soldering directly onto the 68000. This is not an easy task, it should only be done by a competent dealer. PC-Speed was attractive because it was available and it worked and it also ran at a faster Norton rating of 4.0, not a necessarily noticeable difference, but it was faster. Some people waiting for the PC-Ditto II board jumped ship to PC-Speed. But the cost was steep, PC-Ditto II lists at \$299, but Avant-Garde mailed 50% discount coupons to registered owners of the original pc-ditto, so total cost to these customers came to a little over \$150. PC-Speed is much more expensive, a cool \$399! As a result, most people stuck it out and continued to wait for PC-Ditto II.

Welcome to 1990! News started to come out of Florida that yes, PC-Ditto II was finally shipping! But the euphoria died almost as soon as it started. Message bases on GENie and CompuServe were soon filled with posts from angry customers. Quite few of the PC-Ditto II boards were sent out without manuals or warranty cards, other people were missing the software, and the worst was yet to come. 1040 and 520 owners discovered that there would be no way to internally install the huge PC-Ditto II board inside their machines, it was a physical impossibility.

Mega owners who thought they were spared are finding that custom designed ribbon cable and clip doesn't want to stay on the 68000 and many had to restore to soldering the clip onto the 68000. Not only that, the board refuses to work with the blitter chip! For many customers, no matter what they did, the board just would not work. Avant Garde constantly left their phone off the hook and mail sent to them on the networks was left unanswered. Their official response was limited to announcing that they were aware of the problem and were working on a fix.

{Avant Garde has recently acknowledged the problems with it's board and a fix is said to be on the way. The problem apparently involves a timing problem with some ST's and the solution may simply involve replacement of two of the socketed chips on the board and a revision of the software. Unfortunately this doesn't solve the problem of fitting the board inside a 1040 or 520!}

But the second European emulator was on the way and this one would be very different. SuperCharger has arrived in the United States and it promises to be a very attractive alternative to both PC-Ditto II and PC-Speed. SuperCharger is very different from the other two emulators because it doesn't require internal modifications of any kind.

SuperCharger is completely housed in its own external case. The case is a bit wider and little shorter than an external Atari floppy drive and its made from high impact plastic and is color co-ordinated to the ST's case. It comes with four removable plastic feet and depending on where you slide the feet into the case, you can either stand the case on its side or lay it flat, nice touch!

Installation is simple, SuperCharger can literally be set up in under five minutes. The unit is connected to the ST's SCSI port using a standard DMA cable. Since it has a through port, it can be easily daisy-chained along with your hard drive and laser printer and placed anywhere on the SCSI chain. (Although Condor/Talon highly recommends placing SuperCharger at the end of the chain to prevent possible conflicts.)

SuperCharger is factory preset to SCSI 3, but this can be easily changed by opening the unit and moving a plastic jumper - the whole operation should take less than ten minutes. Once connected, SuperCharger

is completely transparent and will in no way affect the operation of your ST. The only warning is that SuperCharger must remain on at all times while you're using your ST or else other devices on the SCSI port may not operate properly. Simply put, turn the unit on and forget about it until you want to use it!

The power cable is innovative and a model of simplicity. Originally SuperCharger came with a power transformer. Not only was this cumbersome, it also occupied a precious power outlet. Condor/Talon was quick to respond and replaced the transformer with a unique splitter cable. One end of the cable connects to the SuperCharger while the other end has two mouse connectors. You simply plug the splitter cable into the mouse port on the keyboard and then connect the mouse to the splitter cable, that's it! This leaves a small thin cable running out of your keyboard and knee-top typing will be a bit more difficult. But the cable is long enough so it can be run nicely under the computer out of sight to the back of SuperCharger.

If you're like me and the keyboard spends 99% of the time on your desk anyway, this won't be a problem. An added bonus is that the splitter cable comes in handy if you want to attach a joystick to the mouse port, no more flipping over the keyboard to replace the mouse!

Inside SuperCharger is a NEC V30 central processor running at 8Mhz with 512K RAM to play with. You read right, instead of relying on the ST's internal memory, SuperCharger comes with its own internal RAM cache! With the cache and SuperCharger's 'hot key' function, it's possible to run an MS-DOS program and instantly switch back into ST mode, hit the keys again and your back in MS-DOS mode - exactly where you left off! The 512K memory is also easily expandable up to 1-meg, simply open the unit and plug in the extra chips, (if only Mega 2's were so easy!) As with any memory upgrade, just keep on eye on the speed of the chips you install. SuperChargers are designed to use chips of 120ns or better, mine came with very fast 70ns chips. Just be sure to chips with the same speed as those in your unit and you won't have any problem.

On SuperCharger's motherboard there is also a socket for an 8087 math co-processor chip. Plug in an Intel 8Mhz 8087 and your spreadsheets, DTP, graphics, and other number crunching MS-DOS programs will fly! Over to one side of the board is an expansion port which will allows SuperCharger to be quickly and easily upgraded! (See below...)

SuperCharger comes with an excellent Utility Disk and MS-DOS 4.01. The Utility's disk allows you to fully customize the software according to your set up. It includes an MS-DOS disk formatter and even a step-rate menu option for those of you with 5 1/4 inch drives. And yes, you read right again, MS-DOS 4.01 is included at no extra charge!! This alone would cost over \$100 if you had to buy it separately (and with the other two emulators, you do...) You're not limited to 4.01 either, SuperCharger will run just fine with any version of MS-DOS.

My SuperCharger is one of the first production units and it came with a xeroxed manual and version 1.10 of the Utility disk. Enclosed was a letter explaining that the demand for SuperCharger forced the company to release the unit slightly ahead of schedule and as a result they were not able to furnish a properly bound manual. But by returning the registration card, a new bound manual and the latest version of the Utility software (currently 1.21) will be sent to you free of charge. You will also be automatically registered to receive all future software updates.

SuperCharger support MS-Windows 286 with version 1.21 SuperCharger offers full serial port and mouse support. The mouse port is setup as COM1 and the serial port as COM2, use the proper mouse driver and SuperCharger will turn your ST mouse into a fully functioning and smooth MS-DOS mouse! SuperCharger works great with both ST monitors. I find the mono display to be sharper and easier to read than the screens offered the other emulators. SuperCharger emulates MDA, CGA, and Hercules graphics modes. Color is bright, vivid, and rock solid, the software also allows you to set your screen for 50Mhz or 60Mhz so you can run European software just fine!

Remember the expansion port I mentioned above? Already in the works and due out in April or May is a VGA card for SuperCharger! The screen displays are already great, with the VGA card they will be spectacular! Condor reports that this card will be comparable in cost to other VGA cards currently out on the market. So how does it work? Turn on the unit and hold down SuperCharger's reset button, boot your system and let go of the reset button when your screen lights up, SuperCharger is now ready to go!

Although not required, its best to create a small partition on your hard drive for MS-DOS to sit in for super-fast booting into MS-DOS mode. For some reason, this partition cannot be accessed from TOS once its created, if you do try to access it from TOS, the files there will be destroyed. The key here is to format the partition you want MS-DOS to reside in using the Utility software and copy MS-DOS 4.01 to it, then remove the partition's icon from the desktop to prevent accidental access. MS-DOS will regard this partition as the boot partition regardless of where it actually sits in TOS mode. So if you turn your "G:" partition into your MS-DOS partition, in MS-DOS mode it will be regarded as the "C:" drive with all your other partitions following one letter "forward".

What SuperCharger does, is use the MS-DOS partition as the boot partition and it then addresses all your TOS partitions one letter "forward one". Sounds confusing, but it isn't. This may help visual it:

TOS: MS-DOS emulation:

C:	----->	D:
D:	----->	E:
E:	----->	F:
F:	----->	G:
<G:>	----->	C:

Because all that really needs to be in the MS-DOS partition is MS-DOS itself, this partition can realistically as small as 1 meg (but check your formatting software to be sure you can create a partition under 5 megs.) You can place your MS-DOS program files anywhere on your drive and SuperCharger will run them just fine even if they are in a TOS partition.

The Utility software can also be run from anywhere on your hard drive and it automatically determines what type of monitor and drives you have connected, but you have the option of changing the settings. Simply double-click the ABIOCON.PRG program and in seconds you're in MS-DOS mode!

SuperCharger works flawlessly, Test Driver II, Jet, and Speedball all work great. Productivity software like WordPerfect 5.1 (the latest!),

WordStar, Lotus 1-2-3, PlanPerfect 5.0, PC-Write, and Dbase IV all ran without a hitch! In all honesty, I have yet to find a program that *won't* run on SuperCharger. (Actually, Norton Utilities won't run properly, but that's because Norton doesn't like MS-DOS 4.01 - not SuperCharger, Norton works fine on SuperCharger under MS-DOS 3.3!)

SuperCharger has passed its FCC certification and should now be shipping here in the States. This a first rate product backed by a company that has been supporting the ST for years and who will do so for many more. SuperCharger lists for \$399 and for that price you get:

- The SuperCharger unit with 512K RAM,
expandable up to 1Meg
- MS-DOS 4.01
- Condor/Talon's Utility software disk
- A nice bound manual
- The DMA and splitter cables
- Unlimited software upgrades
- A socket for an 8087 math co-processor chip
- An expansion port for future upgrade boards
(VGA board due in April/May)

This is an outstanding price compared the other two emulators, especially considering the added expense of dealer installation and other problems. I've dealt with both Talon Industries and Condor Computer and they've been a pleasure to work with. These companies are dedicated to a top-quality product and it shows. One of the goodies planned for the next software update is the ability to access the ST's RAM as well as SuperCharger's, allowing expanded memory operations! The '286 I use at work doesn't even have that!

Because of it's simplicity, ease of use, compatibility, expandability, and the company's dedication to continually support and build on this emulator, I give SuperCharger my highest recommendation. If you have any questions about SuperCharger, feel free to drop me a line!

Peter Szymonik GENie: DIPLOMACY-1 CompuServe: 72637,2272 UseNet:
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SuperCharger

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Berkshire. RG7 4QW
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Tel. 011-44-0734-810066

> NEODESK CPU/STR Spotlightâ € Gribnif sure is busy....
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For those of you who haven't gotten your official Gribnif (NEODESK) newsletter yet, here's a sneak preview of the features in the next version of Neodesk. ALL Rez support (LOW rez too) 100% Custom windows meaning.

NEW Features

- a) Split windows allowing you to show 2 different parts of the same directory
- b) Select all button allowing you to select all items in a window. (even the ones that don't fit in the window)
- c) Background windows (non-selected) can now be resized, full-sized, moved, closed, etc. just like the top window
- d) Each window can independently display text or icons allowing you to mix text windows and Icon windows on the same screen Also each window can have it's own sorting, and text type.
- e) Ability to select and keep selected items which are not in the visible window contents
- f) Ability to change the display fonts used by NeoDesk.
- g) Faster file sorting (visible when opening windows & folders)
- h) Complete file search functions
- i) Ability to place a folder on the desktop (and then copy or move files to it or open it like a disk drive).
- j) Redone in Borland's Turbo C for smaller size and faster speed.
- k) Enhanced compatibility.

And just when you all thought NeoDesk couldn't get much better!

> DynaCADD 1.7 CPU/STR Reviewâ € When only the best will do
=====

DynaCadd Vs AutoCad =====

Part IV -----

by Myles Goddard

In this segment of our comparison of DynaCadd and AutoCad it must be remembered that even though both programs use the same entities, they are sometimes called by different names. As we come across them, I will try to point out the differences and similarities. As I pointed out in our first installment, both AutoCad and DynaCadd have hundreds of commands to learn. I find the learning process much easier with DynaCadd because of the visual interface of GEM and the extremely well thought out icons for the commands used in it. AutoCad has drop down menus, which help quite a bit, but on my 640K AT, it accesses the hard drive frequently when it needs to display them. This can be irritating, at times, but necessary when you have a limited amount of RAM like I do. DynaCadd uses just about all the memory a 1040 can muster so therefore allows almost instantaneous access to drop downs. DynaCadd has online help that is instantly accessed by hard drive and is even fast when run from floppy. Anyway, back to work.....

For novices unaccustomed to drafting terminology, we will go into the basic terms used in these CADD packages. Let's begin.

The Entity is the basic drawing object. It consists of points, lines, circles, arcs, fillets, ellipses, elliptical arcs, text, b-spline curves, Bezier curves and solids.

The DynaCadd book is an enormous source of information as it gives detailed examples of the basics of Drafting Theory in regards to 2D and 3D drawings. It explains the user coordinate system, which is called the UCS in AutoCad but is referred to in DynaCadd as the GCP, or Geometric Coordinate Planes. The GCP's contain seven predefined GCP's. They are the TOP, FRONT, RIGHT, BOTTOM, REAR, LEFT and ISOMETRIC. A LAYER is simply a clear sheet of electronic "paper". In other words, say for example you want to draw some plans that include the walls, electric wires and plumbing. You would need your basic sheet of paper, on which you would draw your basic floor plan. Then you get a clear sheet of mylar and overlay the paper with it. Then you would draw your electric wiring on the mylar. Then you add another clear piece of mylar and on it you would draw your symbols for the plumbing. Well, its the same way with DynaCadd and Autocad. Only instead of having physical sheets laying all over the place, it is done for you electronically. If you make a mistake on your paper, you have to physically erase and redraw it again. With DynaCadd, hit the UNDO key and VIOLA, your mistake is erased for you. DynaCadd offers 256 layers, each of which can be turned "on" or "off". It makes it a whole lot easier to do it on a computer. To change a layer with DynaCadd, you simply move to the LAYER icon and click the mouse. Easy as pie, isn't it?

The user interface of DynaCadd is extremely easy to use and like I said before, if you are familiar with the ST GEM interface, you will have

no problems whatsoever. As an alternative to using the mouse, you may input your commands via the keyboard, although why in the world would you not want to use the mouse? Another neat feature is the drop down calculator that appears when you need to input some numeric values. When the calculator appears, you simply use the keyboard to input your numbers or point with the mouse to the appropriate number. After you hit return or click on the return icon on the calculator, it performs the operation. Another important feature is the Command History Screen. This keeps track of all the commands you have entered since the beginning of the session. This is a handy feature in case you want to look back at a previous operation or series of commands you entered. The online documentation is a lifesaver when the book is not handy and you need to look up a command or something.

The next section will be difficult to illustrate because the icons are a bit difficult to describe but I will attempt it.

Here we go-

You will notice that the drawing area is bordered by a shaded rectangle. The first icon, the BUFFER icon, is two monitors and can be clicked on to one monitor. The reason for this is that since many owners of 1 meg ST need all the available memory for their drawings, this gives you the option of either having a rapid screen refresh or a slower screen refresh but gives more memory for the drawing. Those fortunate folks who have MEGAS generally have enough memory to have the screen refreshed rapidly. I get by just fine with the one monitor icon. The icon next to the BUFFER is the SHOWCOM icon, which when clicked by the mouse or keyed in with the "tab" key brings up the command history.

There is nine drawing modifiers to the right of the SHOWCOM icon. These control the ZOOMs in the display. The first one is called DZEXTENDS and displays the full database area. The next icon is the DZLAST command zooms to the previous zoomed view. It is equivalent to Autocad's ZOOM PREVIOUS command. The next icon represents DZIN which is simply a two fold zoom on any area you select with crosshairs. The DZOUT command does the reverse of DZIN and reduces the zoomed view by a factor of two. The DZALL command zooms the entire drawing into the drawing screen area. The DZWINDOW command lets you adjust the size of the zoom by using a window. Just hit the left button to activate the starting point and click the right button when you have selected your area to zoom in on. The next icon (SCROLL) allows you to move the drawing across the screen by selecting the starting point and then dragging it to another location. The equivalent command in Autocad is called PAN. The next icon (CENTER) allows you to center any part of the drawing by selecting a point with the crosshairs.

The next icon (REPAINT) will redraw edited entities for you. In other words, after you have edited your drawing, there will be areas that will be missing. Actually they are not missing, it's just that they aren't visible until they are repainted. Autocad's equivalent is REDRAW. The next icon (REGEN) repaints the entire drawing instead of edited entities. REGEN is also Autocad's name for the same function. The mode select icon is represented by two boxes, one with a "2D" and the other with a "3D". This allows you to switch between two dimensional and three dimensional drawings. Finally we come to the UNDO icon. It is handy to use when you have made a mistake and want to delete the last operation performed. DELETE will erase everything in sequential order from the last to the first.

Our next installment will cover the drop down menus, which cover a great deal of material so it may take a couple of installments to cover them all. Until next time.....

> Stock Market ~ CPU NewsWireâ €
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THE TICKERTAPE
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by Michael Arthur

Concept by Glenn Gorman

Atari Stock went down 1/4 of a point on Monday, and was down another 1/8 of a point on Tuesday. On Wednesday, Atari Stock went up 1/8 of a point. Finishing up the week at 6 7/8 points, Atari stock is down 3/8 of a point from the last report.

Apple Stock was down 1/2 of a point from Friday, February 2, 1990.

Commodore Stock was down 1/4 of a point from 2/02/90.

IBM Stock was up 5 1/4 points from 2/02/90.

Stock Report for Week of 2/05/90 to 2/09/90

STock	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
Reprt	Last	Chg.	Last	Chg.	Last	Chg.	Last	Chg.	Last	Chg.
Atari	7	- 1/4	6 7/8	- 1/8	7	+ 1/8	----		6 7/8	
									39,100	Sls
CBM	8 3/8	+ 1/8	8 3/8	---	8 3/8	---	----		8 1/2	
									45,200	Sls
Apple	35	+ 1/4	34 3/4	- 1/4	33 1/4		----		34 1/4	
						-1 1/2			1,500,700	Sls
IBM	99 1/8	+2 1/2	101	+1 3/8	101 1/8		----		102 1/2	
						+2 1/8			1,265,400	Sls

'Sls' refers to the # of stock shares that were traded that day.

'CBM' refers to Commodore Corporation.

'----' means that stock prices were not obtained for that day.

> A.U.A. CPU/STR InfoFileâ€¢ Atari Users Association News...
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CURRENT EVENTS - A.U.A.
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by Derek C. Signorini

In keeping with the tradition of my past few articles concerning the activities of the AUA, I once again must report good news concerning the Atari User's Association and the latest developments.

Applications to the AUA are rolling in at a good pace. I have really only made contact of readers of CPU Online and several people on GENie where I uploaded the AUA information package and application and it appears as though the people who read this publication are passing the information on to friends and user groups. Please continue to do this, since many ST users are without modems and are unable to call the pay services and do not download this publication. Once the information of the AUA passes down the channel, the group will grow faster than first anticipated. Thank you all for passing on the word of the AUA and in a few short weeks I will be able to provide more concrete information on the group.

I am proud to announce that Jon Clarke, of New Zealand has been appointed International Public Relations Director for the AUA and is helping the New Zealand Chapter of the AUA get off of the ground. He has a lot support boiling up in his country mainly from the large amounts of user groups there. The Wellington Atari Computer Enthusiasts (WACE) are helping Jon and myself by encouraging it's members to join the AUA and are in full support of our efforts. Keep up the good work gentlemen, and congratulations again to Jon for his appointment.

Also, on the home front for the AUA, I have appointed Anthony Parry as US Public Relations Director for the AUA. Tony is a long time friend and an ST enthusiast and is very knowledgeable and has many connections throughout the software manufacturing industry and will be a great asset to the AUA drive. Tony will be helping me to contact the Usergroups throughout the USA and will also help me to negotiate with software vendors.

The AUA has also gained the endorsement of Plexus Systems Limited from Texas and the UK. Tommy J. Harvey contacted me this week and has given encouragement and support. Plexus Systems Limited is involved in Beta-testing hardware and software for the Atari ST in the US and United Kingdom. Welcome aboard, Tommy!

In the past few days I found time to start working on a logo concept for the AUA and began putting together a printed flyer and application that will be distributed at user shows and by Microtyme Computers. This

logo will become the official logo of the AUA and I am sure that all of you will approve. I am also working on a special video tape that will be sent to the usergroups about the AUA and can be shown at the usergroup meetings. Hopefully, this video will get more usergroups involved in the AUA. No release date has been set for that video at this time.

I am now planning on attending the Atari show in Toronto during the first week of April. Right now, details are very sketchy, but I hope this will be the AUA's first public appearance in 1990. When the details become available, I will pass this information on to you. I am also planning on attending the Washington show in October. This is a definite appearance and the only one that I am absolutely planning on attending this year. If other shows come up this summer, I hope to attend them as well. In addition to the AUA, I work full time as a pharmacist and am also an Atari Developer, so time is very critical here! I wish I could extend the hours of a day by about 24, then maybe I could get more work done! But for now, I must work with what little time I have and make the best of it.

At this time, I am looking for ideas for a name of the printed AUA newsletter. I have had "THE AUA NEWS JOURNAL" and "AUA NEWSBRIEFS" thrown at me by some locals, but I would like some input from the AUA members. Send me mail or E-Mail with your ideas! Remember, members (say that 10 times fast), this is your organization. This is your opportunity to help out! I am also looking for writers to contribute to this newsletter. The first publication will be in April, so if you want to send in letters, reviews, etc, then send them now. You may send them in any format you wish, but I would prefer if you would email articles to me or send them on disk. If the articles or letters are small, just send me a printed copy, since my wife is eager to brush up on her typing!

That just about raps it up. I will be writing about every other week for CPU Online, so watch for latest updates here or on GENie. Keep up the good support, and I invite all of you who have not sent in your applications to do so! Thank you all for your continued support!

Derek C. Signorini
AUA Coordinator

GENie: DC.SIGNORINI
CIS : 72327,1060
FNET : node #19, DC Signorini
FIDO : 1:129/96 or Private net 30323/2, DC Signorini

ATARI USER'S ASSOCIATION === MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES

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PACKAGE ONE:	ACTIVE AUA MEMBERSHIP W/DISK --	\$15.00
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Includes one year membership to the Atari User's Association and Disk

Subscription to the Atari Elite Electronic Chronicles.

Your benefits:

- o Subscription to the Atari Elite Electronic Chronicles, the newsletter on disk sent 6 times a year. Contains the newest in PD software, reviews, columns, advertising, etc... Compare this to the \$79.00 subscription fee to some magazines!
- o Subscription to the AUA newsletter published (projected) 4 times a year.
- o Enhanced Access time on the Atari Elite, Inc. BBS supporting 19,200 baud, 120 megs online, FIDO, and FNET.
- o Special purchase prices available from the backing of the Atari Elite, Inc. of Pittsburgh. Numbers have Power! Pick up some good deals!
- o Special group discounts at MICROTYME
- o Special purchase prices offered by the AUA. Once again, numbers talk!
- o Special mailings from both the Atari Elite Inc. and the AUA or any other usergroups who wish to participate.
- o ANY AND ALL BENEFITS of being a member of the LARGEST Atari User base in the world!

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PACKAGE TWO:  ACTIVE AUA MEMBERSHIP w/newsletter -- $5.00
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Includes one year membership to the Atari User's Association and a subscription to the AUA Newsletter.

Your benefits:

- o Special purchase prices offered by the AUA. Once again, numbers talk!
- o Special mailings from the AUA including the AUA newsletter published 4 times a year.
- o Membership in the Largest Atari User Base in the world!
- o Special group discounts at Microtyme
- o ANY AND ALL BENEFITS of being a member of the Largest Atari User Base in the world!

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PACKAGE THREE:  NON-ACTIVE AUA MEMBERSHIP --  $$ FREE $$
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Includes one year membership to the Atari User's Association. This membership does not entitle you to any mailings made by the AUA but still makes you eligible for any special purchase prices offered by the AUA or any group discounts offered by Microtyme. You will also have access to

Primary Use of your Atari Computer:

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If you are a member of a User Group, Please fill in:

UG Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Country _____

BBS # _____ No. of Members _____

President's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Comments: _____

I can be reached at FNET node: _____ and/or FIDO
 node: _____ GENie _____ CIS _____ other _____

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MEMBERSHIP FEES: ☐ Non-Active AUA Membership -- \$ FREE \$

☐ Active AUA w/Newsletter -- \$ 5.00/year

Please Select ONE ☐ Active AUA W/Newsletter & Disk -- \$ 15.00/year

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Mail application to:

The Atari User's Association
 Attn: D.C. Signorini
 P.O. Box 18293
 Pittsburgh, PA 15236

=====

MicroTyme Computers is an official supplier of the AUA at: 1-800-255-5835

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----- Clip Here -----

> WAYNE GRETZKY CPU/STR Reviewâ ¢ A Premier Hockey Game...

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Wayne Gretzky Hockey
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by D.C. Signorini

From the time I became an avid hockey fan back in 1984, due, in part, to the emergence of Mario Lemieux and the resurgence of the Pittsburgh Penguins, I have been searching for the ultimate hockey game for the ST. I have seen 3 or 4 of them come through in the past 3 years, and each of them is far from my expectations of what a good computer simulated hockey game should be. Each of them had one feature or another that made them inferior to games that I had seen at the arcade. None of them were able to give me the playing satisfaction that I was looking for. So, I waited, hoping that someone somewhere would have the incentive to develop a good hockey simulation. There are great football simulators, a few fantastic baseball games, and a handful of other sport packages that are very good and use the powerful graphic capabilities of the Atari ST.

Why then, is hockey such a difficult simulation to develop? In sports like baseball, and for example, Hardball by Accolade, you control only one player at a time. You are either pitching or catching, throwing or hitting, and that is it. You are not required to control any other player on the field, until of course, an action prompts you to do so. In hockey, while you only need to control the player with the puck, there are 5 other players moving on the ice while their positions are crucial to the outcome of the play. There are plenty of factors involved in hockey including skating, passing, shooting, and lets not leave out hard hitting. From a developer's perspective, there are a lot of events that must be monitored and calculations to be made. That may be the reason there just has not been a good hockey simulation marketed for the ST. Until now.

Wayne Gretzky Hockey (WGH), by Bethesda Softworks, is by far the answer in hockey simulations for which I have been searching for almost 3 years. First marketed for the IBM and compatibles, WGH was designed by Wayne Gretzky hockey and other hockey professionals including several players from the Washington Capitals. This game requires a great deal of skill while it offers some exciting action and a few other features that I will discuss later.

When you boot WGH, you are greeted with the a title screen and then the Game Setup Menu. From the menu screen you can choose the mode of control, either joystick or mouse, and other features including playing speed, skill levels of both you and your opponent, period time length, and also the type of play which is broken down as control player, play and coach, coach only, and Wayne coaches. The type of play you chose depends on what level of involvement you want. If you select 'control player' you are only responsible for play on the ice. Any coaching decisions are made automatically by the computer and is suggested for beginners. 'Play and coach' will also give you complete control over line changes This mode gives you the most control over the entire team and the game. If you select 'coach only' from the set up menu, then you are only responsible for strategic decisions including lines and line changes. And lastly, if you select 'Wayne Coaches' you can sit back and just watch the game with no involvement at all.

Next, on the Game Setup Menu, you can choose from 4 'Team Quality Levels' including High School, College, Junior, and Pro. Your team will play best at the 'pro' level while in 'high school' mode you will see some poor hockey. You can set up the game so that you, the home team, play at the pro level while your opponent, the visitor team, plays at the high school level. It is nice to beat up on your opponent this way!

You can also select 'Game Type' from the Game Setup Menu. Four

choices are available including: Practice Game, Normal Game, and Playoff Game. During 'practice game' you will have only three players on the ice plus your goalie. Penalties will be called, but no one will be sent to the penalty box. If you select 'Normal Game' action will be fast paced and a sudden death overtime period of 5 minutes will be played in case of a tie. In addition, 'Playoff Game' will play like 'Normal Game' except in sudden death you will play until there is a winner!

One of the finer features of the game is Fights. You have the option to include or eliminate fights during play. Now, this feature is unique. If you select fights, the probability of two players fighting is greatly increased. You can provoke a fight by harassing a player, or the computer will randomly instigate a fight between two computer controlled players. When a fight occurs, the viewing screen on the gondola will display the fight in life like animation. This is really a great feature of WGH since fighting is a very real part of professional hockey and the graphics and animation is well done. Though the documentation does not mention exactly how many fight sequences are on the disk, you can purchase additional fight diskettes from Bethesda Softworks if you get tired of seeing the same fight sequences. You will have to see this in action to appreciate it!!

Other features on the Game Setup Menu include cursor size for mouse play, printer choice which directs printing to the serial or Parallel ports, and color selection which allows you to change the colors of each team.

One of the last features found on the Game Setup Menu is the 'Team Editor' selection. Clicking on this selection brings up the 'Team Construction Menu' where you can load a team from the data disk or create your own team roster. You are given a nice selection of teams to start with on the data diskette including the 1989 LA Kings, the 1988 Edmonton Oilers, and the 1970 Boston Bruins to name a few. The team roster includes a list of team players, their number, position, and a list of 11 individual player characteristics including aggression, quickness, power, injury, skating, checking, and shooting. Each characteristic is assigned a number from a 0 to 9 rating which allows you to influence a team's playing style. If you assign each player's characteristic list all 9's, you will have one powerful team. Conversely, if you want real life like action, you can create a characteristic list that depicts a player's actual hockey capabilities. For example, a player like Mario Lemieux would have a rating of 8 and 9 for puck control, passing, and shooting, while having a checking rating of 4 or 5. Players like Mark Messier would have a high aggression, checking, and power rating, and possibly a lower puck control and shooting rating. This 'Team Construction Menu' offers the game a great deal of realism and flexibility. Once you create your super team, you can save it to the diskette and recall it at a later time. Also, this allows you to match up say the 1970 Bruins with the 1986 Canadians and sit back to enjoy the match in 'Wayne Coaches' mode!

Another fine feature of WGH is the statistics capabilities of the game. The computer will track penalty stats, shots on goal, goals, assists, and a lot of other vital numbers from the game of hockey and will save them to diskette with the team roster. Theoretically, you can create a roster for each team in the NHL and a schedule and play an entire NHL season from the comfort of your home. The stats can also be printed to the printer for a hard copy.

If that is not enough, how does all of this sound: Instant Replay, Save and Review Game, Digitized Sound effects taken from actual ice sound,

Animated refs and Animated penalty calls, and overhead display showing all action. The game has many fine features that makes it truly enjoyable.

Finally, a mention on the actual game play. WGH can be played with either a mouse or joystick. In either mode, you decide which player you will control by selecting the appropriate function key on the keyboard. F1 to control the Left Defenseman, F2 for the Left Winger, F3 for the Center, F4 for the Right Winger and F5 for the Right Defenseman. While the game defaults with control of the Center, you have the option to choose any player on the ice except the goalie. In mouse mode, you move a special cursor/pointer in the direction you want the player to move. The further away the pointer is from the player, the faster he will skate in that direction. Hold down the mouse button and move the cursor in the direction you want to pass or shoot the puck. Sounds simple, right? Not hardly. I have found that control with the joystick is much easier for me since it is a bit difficult to watch your player, the other 10 players on the ice AND the pointer at the same time. I prefer joystick mode, which does not make use of this moving pointer. Instead, your player moves and shoots the puck in the direction the joystick is pointing. Much easier. I am also using a Gravis Mouse stick which is much easier on the wrist compared to the old Atari Joystick that I have had since 1981. (yes, my original joystick that I used with my 800 is still alive and well, but has been demoted due to the emergence of the Gravis). In joystick mode, you skate with the puck and while skating, you simultaneously push the button and point the joystick in the direction that you want to shoot or pass and when you release the button, the puck is sent.

Overall, Wayne Gretzky Hockey is a well developed piece of software for the Atari ST. Some things that would make the game better include more sound effects such as skating and possibly the sounds of a slap shot or the puck hitting the goal posts. These would be nice additions adding even more real life action. The documentation is at times thin and not very explanatory. For instance, the documentation often refers to another section in the manual only to cross reference back to the original reference not ever really explaining the feature at all. The manual could have been a bit more thorough and more time should have been taken explaining the software instead of what Wayne Gretzky expects from a hockey player or game. On a more personal note, and not taking away from the talent of Wayne Gretzky, the package makes too many references to Wayne Gretzky and his achievements. If you lived in Pittsburgh and have watched Mario Lemieux in action, you will be the first to say that Wayne Gretzky is not the best player in hockey. However, I thank him for his involvement with Bethesda Softworks and for inspiring the company to produce a fine quality hockey simulation.

- Sarasota, FL. **** INTERSECT TO DROP MASTERLINK CONCEPT ****

In a recent conversation with Intersect, they have indicated that they will not be pursuing the background downloading feature in future releases of Masterlink, in fact, it is perceived that the best that can be expected is a superior upgrade to Interlink. The Interlink Telecommunications Software is one of the best available in the ST arena and has in the past years enjoyed greater support than the other popular giant, Flash. We have this, unconfirmed, from a usually reliable source that we can forget about seeing Flash 2.0, at least, for now. Most all the developers cite the Lack of commitment on Atari's part for their decisions.

- Pontiac, MI ***** MICHTRON READY FOR STE & PC SPEED *****

In their usual ongoing, excellent support of the ST userbase, MichTron has announced that the emulator they market in the USA, PC SPEED is now ready and fully compatible with the STE. The new STE PCSpeed units will be here and ready for the planned April release of the STE to the US market.

In another area, MichTron has made know a potential headache to folks who think they are getting a bargain PC Speed, it seems a slick west coast operator-distributor has made an overseas purchase of the units from a grey market source. Folks, make sure the MichTron Logo is on the package and that your receipt states "Michtron PC Speed" if the place you are buying this device from cannot provide either, think twice. There will be no support for un-registered owners. Send in your registration cards. There are none in the non-MichTron packages.

- Sunnyvale, CA ***** NO APRIL FOOLS PLEASE! *****

The story line sounds all too familiar, "We will ship in April" Hmmm, let's not forget what April is synonymous with; April fools and tax time. Hopefully the STE will ship in April and the US market will have NEW LIFE breathed into it.

The Atari Advantage... hmmmm Advantage, wasn't or isn't that a brand of cigarettes, soap or a laundry detergent? Atari wants to call a promotional package they will offer in April this name while the promotion is a carbon copy of the European offering called "The Power Pack". Ah yes, the name game. Strange tho', a highly successful promo in Europe and they want to change it here.. duh! A single name heard 'round the world makes for instant recognition. Or, at least it used to.

- Sunnyvale, CA ***** R.STRINGARI RESIGNS! *****

The president of the games division is gone..... after all, so is

this year's Winter CES. Now comes the "good" news; Atari is planning on merging the Computer and games (entertainment) divisions into one unit headed up by a new president, who brings with him excellent promotional capabilities. But he has little or no experience in the computer field. He was previously president of a beverage (sparkling water) company. (sound familiar?) "Does YOUR vichy water taste funny?"

- Jacksonville, FL

***** AVANT-GARDE IGNORES LOCALS!!! *****

Sadness, anger, frustration, and lastly, revenge seem to be the order of the day with the local supporters of Avant Garde in Jacksonville, Florida, (PC-DITTO II). Its a very sad tale indeed. It began yesterday when two customers, both carrying the wonderfully satisfying NEW PCDITTO II botch job went to Avant Garde's address to try and get the new PALS and/or some help. Well what we are about to tell you is indeed, hard to take folks, but here it is.. in its stark reality. The first fellow drove up and went to the door, after walking around the huge Mercedes Benz, he knocked and while waiting, he could hear voices talking and laughing upstairs. Thinking they didn't hear his knock, the fellow called out to Bill Teal (he knows Bill personally and recognized his voice). There was immediate silence and no further conversation, they never came to the door, looked out or spoke another word.

The second approach was more of the same cold shoulder nonsense. Folks, we were informed that the mailbox was already damaged, could that have been done by other angry locals? The important thing here is why? Why did they NOT answer the door? One may speculate many different reasons. A gut feeling says; they simply didn't have the chips ready at the time and did not want it known. Hopefully, when these folks go to the door next week the response is more positive and customer satisfaction oriented. To intentionally ignore paying customers is plain dumb.

After this occurred, the fellows decided to try MA BELL. This was another wonderful learning experience on how to do business, win friends and influence people, ...CONSTANT BUSY SIGNALS. They then called the phone company and asked that they check the line and possibly do an emergency interrupt. This is basically what they were told. "We are sorry, but no-one is talking on the line, but we can hear voices in the background. We will report this to service for you". Ah yes.. "the old, off the hook routine"!

Perhaps the time has come for the users to let Avant-Garde know they are truly unhappy and something must be done now. For example, send the PALS to every customer out there that received the botched boards. After all, lets make sure the PCD2 they own may be used from one machine to the next. By saying, "if it works its ok, don't fix it", is not enough. You should say, if it works in the machine you have it in now, doesn't mean it will be ok in a different machine therefore, we are sending the chips to all who have received boards from us. Also have you finally stopped shipping the defective boards??? Or is this too, going to continue until the cows come home? With the phones still off the hook!

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